

Appl. No. 10/561,742
Amdt. dated November 29, 2007
Reply to Office action of September 5, 2007

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action, and the following remarks are presented for the Examiner's consideration.

A new claim 18 has been added by amendment herein. Claim 18 clearly distinguishes from the prior art of record, for at least the reason that none of the references teaches or suggests that "*all of the air* within said interior region is cyclically *recirculated along a closed path* by said ventilator through the air duct

Claims 1, 4-13 and 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0053607 to Gaaloul et al. (hereinafter "Gaaloul"). For the following reasons, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claim 1, Gaaloul does not teach that "the air within said interior region (4) is recirculated by said ventilator (7) through an air duct . . . *forming a closed loop* with said interior region." By contrast, Gaaloul teaches an apparatus for treating clothes in the form of a collapsible or expandable container provided with a "vent (28) such that a portion of the air circulated within the interior void space (19) of container (12) *is vented to the exterior of the container*" (see Paragraph [0031]). Since the container (12) of Gaaloul is provided with a vent (28), it is clear that Gaaloul does not teach an air duct forming a *closed loop*, as required by claim 1. Thus, since every limitation of the claim is not taught as required, claim 1 is not fully anticipated by Gaaloul and the rejection should be withdrawn. Since claims 4-13 and 15-17 each depend from claim 1, they are not anticipated for the same reasons.

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Further, Applicants respectfully submit that it is not clear from the Detailed Action in the Office Action, which structure in Gaaloul is being relied upon for teaching the “air duct (10) located between said internal walls (3) and said external walls” of claim 1. If the Examiner intends to maintain the rejection, it is respectfully requested that a more detailed explanation be provided.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gaaloul in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,745,496 to Cassella. For the following reasons, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

As explained above with regard to claim 1, Gaaloul does not disclose the required “closed loop” limitation. Further, nothing in Gaaloul or Cassella suggests or otherwise renders obvious the modification of Gaaloul to include this limitation. Specifically, in Gaaloul, the vent (28) is necessary due to the collapsible nature of the structure receiving the clothes to be treated. It should be appreciated that the air within a collapsible structure without a vent might cause the structure to swell or wilt depending on the expansion of hot air circulating inside the apparatus or the pressure difference between the clothes treating chamber and the outside environment. Thus, for the above reasons and since claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1, claims 2 and 3 are not rendered obvious by Gaaloul in view of Cassella.

Further, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate a water level measuring device into the teachings of Gaaloul based on the teachings of Cassella. The Examiner cites column 2, line 50 to column 3, line 2 of Cassella for this teaching. The cited

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passage refers only to drawbacks of a prior art patent (US 5,815,961) which comprises an inflatable hanger and a water reservoir to be continually refilled. The Cassella reference does not teach using water for treating clothes, but rather only hot air since the disclosed machine is a dryer (see column 3, lines 3-12 of Cassella). Even US 5,815,96, the prior art cited by Cassella, does not teach a water level measuring device for monitoring water in the reservoir, as required by claim 3. Thus, even if the teachings of Gaaloul and Cassella were combined, every limitation of the claims would not be taught. Therefore, the rejection should be withdrawn.

In consideration of the foregoing analysis, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. WZP 39288.

Respectfully submitted,
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